

IXWORTH & IXWORTH THORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Councillor Ben Lord
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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 9th July 2025

At Ixworth Village Hall

Councillors Present: Ben Lord (Chairman), Terry Lilley, Sam Linton, Stephen Mann, Tony Molloy, Kate Rees and John Rowe

Others in attendance: Claire Usher (Clerk), Joanna Spicer County Councillor and 3 members of the public.

090725/01 **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Black and John Griffiths District Councillor. All Councillors resolved to accept the apologies.

090725/02 **Declarations of Interest (DoI):** Cllr Rowe declared a non pecuniary interest in item 6C on the agenda.

Dispensation: Councillors noted no requests had been received and none were requested at the meeting.

090725/03 **Minutes of previous meeting:** All Councillors resolved to accept the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 11th June as a true reflection of the decisions made and authorised Cllr Lord to sign the minutes.

Public Forum:

090725/04 A member of the public asked if the light outside of Ixworth Thorpe church could be looked at as this was not working. Clerk to follow this up.

090725/05 **County Councillor Report:** County Councillor Joanna Spicer reported that she had met with the SCC Highways to discuss the bus stop on the High Street and road markings to indicate a bus stop. This would mean the removal of parking spaces for residents and all Councillors agreed that the arrangement works well at the present time and it should remain as it is.

Planning:

090725/06 Councillors considered the following application made to the local District Council relating to Ixworth since the last parish council meeting:

DC/25/0980/FUL – Installation and operation of a 42MW ground mounted Solar Farm with substation, CCTV, boundary fence, equipment, landscaping and necessary grid connection infrastructure – Land South of Knox Lane, Bardwell – Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr Rowe and seconded by Cllr Lilley that the Parish Council has no objection to this application. Following a show of hands, 4 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention it was agreed to support this application.

DC/25/1026/VAR – Variation of Condition 2 of DC/20/0852/FUL to allow use of amended plans for a. conversion of agricultural barn to one dwelling b. one outbuilding with garage – Wood Street Farm Barn, Crown Lane – All Councillors agreed to support this application.

DC/25/0998/PIP – Permission in Principle – one dwelling – Land at Royal Oaks, Thetford Road – Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr Mann and seconded by Cllr Lilley that the Parish Council has no objection to this application. Following a show of hands, 5 in favour and 2 objections it was agreed to support this application.

DC/25/1052/TCA – Trees in a conservation area notification – Two Plum trees to fell – 8 Council Houses, Stow Road – All Councillors agreed they had no comment.

DC/25/0370/OUT – Outline planning application with all matters reserved (means of access to be considered) a. up to 160 dwellings b. provision of open space c. landscaping d. sustainable drainage, associated infrastructure and works – Land West of Bardwell Road – Cllr Lord presented the plans to Councillors and the public and highlighted the change proposed by the developers to accommodate the school buses within the site, to include a turning area, a parking area, all still accessed via the main entrance to the development and opposite proposed housing. Following an in-depth discussion by Councillors and Mr Spiller it was proposed by Cllr Rees and seconded by Cllr Linton that the Parish Council objects to this application. 6 Parish Councillors agreed to support refusal with 1 abstention. The Parish Council refused the application for the following reasons:-

Principally, this re-consultation has derived from the applicant proposing mitigations to some of the objections submitted by us and other representations. In particular, this centres around a proposed solution for school buses that currently park legitimately along Bardwell Road opposite the proposed access junction. Having reviewed this, Councillors remarked that this simply moves the problem elsewhere and does not reasonably resolve the situation for the following reasons:

- The proposed location of this 'bus park' would overlook the residential properties opposite and be an abhorrently unwelcoming feature to the development the applicant seeks.
- By creating this, the applicant is simply moving the problem from one location to another, surrounding road which is vehemently inappropriate. The manoeuvring of large coaches in what is to be a road of unknown status would involve reversing manoeuvres that are inappropriate given the proximity to the junction itself, as well as the nature in which this access road is to facilitate. Moreover, the access to this site will be exacerbated by the mixed-use that the site is allocated to be despite the lack of detail around the exact outline of what the mixed-use entails.
- As Ixworth High School has requested a solution to its bus handling capacity constraints 'off-site' (ie. Away from the school site), it is extremely possible that with the creation of this "grasscrete" facility that this would become a substantive drop-off/pick-up facility for students of Ixworth High School. This is totally unacceptable at this location for several reasons, including:
 - o Weak, uncontrolled provision of crossing facilities that would compromise the safeguarding of students crossing the road to embark/disembark buses
 - o The width of the pavement along Walsham Road to Ixworth High School is completely unsatisfactory in its width causing it to be single file for pedestrians. It frequently floods in inclement weathers due to poor drainage maintenance on the highway. The extent of congestion at school pick-up times results in cars being parked along Walsham Road from the junction with Thistledown Drive to Coltsfoot Close. This also presents several safeguarding issues for the welfare of children as they go to/from school.
- The proposed substantive bus stops just prior to the proposed access junction lacks proper crossing provisions. Not only is this a concern for pedestrians that would be utilising public transport in this vicinity of the village, but it is a particular concern for students currently being picked up by bus to go to Thurston Community College embark the bus on the grass area between Walsham Road and St Edmunds Close. If these bus stops were to go ahead as proposed, it is clearly intended that these school buses will be expected to utilise these bus stops to pick up/disembark students which then promotes insufficient safe crossing facilities. No bus users should have to endure utilising a bus stop that fails to provide safe, controlled road crossing features.

The proposed mitigations do not constitute a comprehensive improvement that the Parish Council requested in its earlier objection. Notwithstanding that the other themes set out in our earlier objection have not received sufficient attention or mitigation by the applicant, on balance the Parish Council considers it appropriate to further call for this application to be **refused** planning consent in the absence of any meaningful, proposed mitigations to community infrastructure impact that our objection of 9 April outlined and that the re-consultation fails to address.

090725/07 Cllr Lord reported that he had attended the planning meeting at West Suffolk Council this afternoon where the application by Bloor Homes for 220 dwellings in Stanton had been Deferred. Cllr Lord had spoken at the meeting on behalf of the Parish Council objecting to this application especially in connection with the impact on the infrastructure including GP surgeries and other amenities.

090725/08 **Land at Shepherds Grove, Stanton and Hepworth** - Cllr Lord reported that Jaynic were bringing forwards the strategic employment area allocation. As part of the planning process a Masterplan for the land at Shepherds Grove, Stanton and Hepworth needs to be approved prior to an application being submitted at the site. There was a six-week consultation process and the details will be circulated to all Councillors for them to respond direct.

090725/09 **Public Rights of Way:**
Cllr Lord reported that following the Parish Council's last meeting, SCC Public Rights of Way Officer had informed him that those providing evidence for particular sites that their names would be in the public domain. He reported that he had evidence for some sites, such as old ordnance survey plans and old permission. He will report to the Parish Council once a submission had been prepared.

090725/10 Kebab Van Hearing – Cllr Lord reported that following the decision by West Suffolk Council, the kebab van had now moved from the site. Cllr Lord reported that he had receive a number of offensive messages from members of the community, but, also a lot of positive support.

Finance:

090725/11 All Councillors confirmed receipt of the finance report for the period ending 30th June 2025.

- 090725/12 **Bank Reconciliation** – Councillors received a bank reconciliation report prepared by the Clerk, the Community Account as of 30th June 2025 £5,991.56, the Business Account as of 30th June 2025 £118,136.28, total £124,127.84.
- 090725/13 **Budget to actual Payments and Receipts:** Councillors noted the report.
- 090725/14 **Receipts:** The Clerk confirmed that £225.00 had been received for an interment of ashes.
- 090725/15 **Payments:** All Councillors resolved to approve the following gross payments by internet banking confirming a full schedule, supported by invoices and receipts, had been received prior to the meeting:

	Payee	Details	£
090725/16	Claire Usher	Clerks Wages x 3 months	3071.60
090725/17	H Jermy	Waste Collection	494.71
090725/18	R Pye	Caretaker Cemetery	164.90
090725/19	Jose Mendez Acosta	Village Maintenance	783.74
090725/20	Claire Usher	Expenses	78.53
090725/21	Claire Usher	Mileage	60.48
090725/22	CloudyIT	Work to new laptop	134.58
090725/23	Suffolk County Council	Dropped Kerb Contribution	1000.00
090725/24	Paul Sparkes	Ashes Interment	150.00
090725/25	Create	Planning Support	456.00
090725/26	Ben Lord	Expenses	67.20
090725/27	Wave	Cemetery Water	47.52
090725/28	SALC	Membership	728.60
090725/29	CloudyIT	Monthly payment	134.58

The Chairman was authorised to transfer £7,000.00 from the Business account to the Community account.

- 090725/30 **Terms of Reference – Finance Sub Committee:** The Clerk had circulated to all Councillors the proposed terms of reference prior to the meeting. All Councillors approved the terms of reference.

- 090725/31 **Clerks Mobile Phone:** Cllr Lord had researched the best value for a mobile phone for the Clerk. To purchase an iphone plus contract with EE would cost £30 per month for 3 years = £1,296 plus VAT or the purchase of a refurbished iphone from Apple would cost £509 inc VAT with a sim card for 12 months at £17 plus VAT per month. It was approved by all Councillors that a refurbished iphone be purchased and the Council enter a contract for a sim card at £17 plus VAT per month for 12 months with EE.
- Office Premises:**
- 090725/32 Cllr Lord reported that discussions regarding the High Street premises had been temporarily put on hold whilst the Council await what the Jiggins Trust was proposing as an office space at the village hall. The Council had been offered a room to the rear of the main hall and having inspected this room it was felt by all Councillors that this was not suitable and would require a large amount of work and expense to bring the room up to an office standard, having previously been used by the Scouts to house their equipment. This was being offered at a yearly rent of £4000 to £5000 with other expenses to be negotiated. The room was measured against the Council's criteria for a public service area and it was felt that it did not meet any of these requirements and therefore the Jiggins Trust would be informed that this room would not be acceptable.
- As regards the High Street, the Chairman would circulate the draft lease agreement and ask the Solicitors for some extra time to consider this as the lawyers for the other party were pushing for a decision.
- 090725/33 **Outstanding Actions and Clerks Report:** – All outstanding actions from the last meeting had been completed.
- 090725/34 **Health and Safety:** Cllr Lilley reported that he had met with the Cemetery Caretaker and a risk assessment had been discussed and signed by Mr Pye. There were some safety wear that Mr Pye required, as it was agreed by all Councillors that these items be purchased. The equipment that he was using to be maintained and training provided for the safe use of the equipment. He advised that himself and the Clerk were due to meet with the Waste Collector to discuss her risk assessment and her safety equipment, including business car insurance.
- The Clerk and Cllr Lilley to meet with a contractor to discuss the play area report to look at the area's that need urgent attention.
- 090725/35 **Chairman's Report:** Cllr Lord reported that he had met with the outgoing Head of Ixworth Primary School and the new Head, to discuss the planning issues in the

village, and the need to be involved in establishing a primary school as part of the Persimmon application. He had also attended a meeting with representatives of NHS Suffolk & Norfolk East Essex Integrated Care Board to discuss GP provision and the impact the proposed developments in the area will impact these services. He had asked the local MP to engage with the Board but he had not yet received a response.

090725/36 **Councillors Reports:** Cllr Rees had concerns that the pine cones on the ground at the top of Bury Road could get slippery in wet weather and asked that the Action Group be asked to clear this.

Cllr Mann was aware that the EV chargers outside the village hall were not working and this would be the situation for some time as the Jiggins Trust were looking for cheaper alternatives. It was felt that these should be moved elsewhere in the car park and return the 2 disabled parking bays.

Cllr Rowe would like Councillors to consider Parish Meetings taking place on a Monday or Friday instead of a Wednesday. It was felt that with other commitments during the week, Wednesdays remained the favoured evening.

090725/37 **Correspondence:**

The Clerk reported that she had received a letter of appreciation to Cllr Lord and notification of the public consultation at land at Shepherds Grove. Both will be circulated to all Councillors.

090725/38 **Any other Council business for information to be noted or for inclusion in a future agenda:** None

090725/39 All Councillors noted that the next meeting of the Parish Meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th August 2025 at the Village Hall.

090725/40 The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.10pm.

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Signed Date